

Mom's Voice May Be Best to Relieve Stress



Talking to mom – even if it's by phone – may be one of the best ways to calm nerves and relieve stress for young girls. Most people already knew that, but now there's science to back it up.

To Calm Nerves, Talk to Mom

Researchers at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee surprised a group of young girls between the ages of seven and twelve by giving them with a series of math problems to solve in front of a group of people - or by asking them to give a speech for which they weren't prepared. This unexpected stressor was enough to raise levels of the stress hormone, cortisol - a hormone that goes up when a person is anxious or stressed.

After raising stress and cortisol levels in these young girls, some of the girls were comforted by their own mom in person, while another group was soothed by talking to mom on the phone. A third group simply watched a boring video.

The results? Both groups of girls who talked to their mom – either by phone or in person - had higher levels of a hormone called oxytocin. Oxytocin is a hormone that has a variety of positive effects on the brain. When more of it's released it causes a sense of contentment and well-being which helps to calm nerves and ease stress.

How Does Oxytocin Help to Calm Nerves?

One way it does this is by suppressing centers of the brain associated with fear and anxiety. Oxytocin has other functions – and plays an important role in stimulating the contractions that lead up to childbirth. It also enhances the female sexual response.

Talking to Mom Eases Stress

After these “stressed out” girls talked to their mom, not only did they have higher levels of oxytocin, but their levels of the stress hormone cortisol fell and stayed down even after they returned home. Talking to mom helped to calm nerves and ease the stress that these young girls were feeling – even if it was only by phone.

The Bottom Line

If you're a mom, just the sound of your voice may help to calm nerves and make a stressed out child feel more relaxed. If you have a daughter who's feeling some pressure, why not give her a call?

References:

Eurekalert website. "For Comfort, Mom's Voice Works as Well as a Hug".

Teach your child powerful anxiety relief techniques at www.gozen.com